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27th Legislative District

April 6, 2009

Dear Neighbors,

Last week was a big week in Olympia. The much anticipated Senate and House operating and capital budget proposals were released. The week before, the transportation budget proposal was released. I believe it is important to understand the difference between these biennial budgets.

The operating budget pays for the day-to-day operations of state government such as education, healthcare, corrections, and the list goes on. As I have mentioned many times this session, the proposed cuts are devastating for those potentially affected and were heartbreaking for legislators to make. For more detailed information click [here](#).

The state construction, or capital, budget proposal uses mostly construction bonds instead of cash that make up a legally separate budget from the state operating budget. The capital budget is a long term investment strategy that the state uses to construct and preserve public facilities — everything from water systems to schools and community centers. The Senate capital budget proposal offers the 27th district communities some vital construction projects which will help to balance some of the cuts made in the operating budget. It is important to recognize these projects were picked because they are ready to start, will help create local jobs, and provide important services to people in our community.

The Senate and House transportation budget proposals, which pay for public transit and road maintenance, were also released last week.

There are only three weeks left in this legislative session, and we are moving quickly toward exclusive floor action. The budget proposals will dominate discussions as both chambers try to reach agreements on the final operating, transportation and capital budgets.

Monday, April 6 is the last day the Senate fiscal committees can pass bills from the House. April 17 is the last day the Senate can consider House bills, with certain exceptions.

I look forward to lively, but civil debate as we make some very difficult decisions and am confident we'll be able to reach agreement with the House and with Gov. Gregoire between now and the end of session on April 26th.

Warm Regards,

Sen. Debbie Regala
27th Legislative District

Olympia Office: 360.786.7652
Email: regala.debbie@leg.wa.gov

Capital budget — lean and focused

The 2009 – 2011 capital budget, released last Wednesday, is a triumph of ingenuity in difficult times. At \$3.3 billion, it's 29 percent smaller than the 2007 – 2009 budget and nearly \$700 million less than what Gov. Gregoire proposed months ago before revenues fell lower. We managed to cover our most vital core needs while putting more Washingtonians to work and supporting the local economy.

This capital budget is smaller for two reasons — our loss of revenue in the recession, and because we transfer \$743 million in cash accounts to cover basic needs in health and public safety in the operating budget. Without that transfer, we would have had to cut the operating budget by the equivalent of the entire Basic Health Program — on top of all our other cuts.

Some proposed local projects include:

- Allocating \$1.9 million towards building the new Eastside Clinic will provide access to health care for many low-income families.
- Goodwill's Milgard Work Opportunity Center in the Hilltop district would receive \$1.85 million dollars towards their 63,000-square-foot, four-story LEED Silver certified green facility which is already under construction. Goodwill's mission is to expand job-training and placement services for people with disabilities in the greater Pierce County area.
- University of Washington Tacoma is to receive \$34 million towards the renovation of the Joy building which is expected to serve an additional 600 students. Unfortunately, the proposed House capital budget doesn't include this funding, but I will work hard to make sure it is included in the final capital budget.

Transportation budget — creating local jobs and improving facilitation of commerce

Last week, the Senate passed a [transportation budget](#) that provides \$4.3 billion in funding for over 400 projects all over the state using revenue sources that are kept separate from the operating and capital (non-transportation construction) budgets. Funded primarily with our state's gas taxes, these funds are constitutionally dedicated to building, maintaining and operating our state highway system — including the marine highways serviced by Washington State Ferries.

Transportation revenue and investment packages authorized by the Legislature in 2003 and 2005 — and endorsed by citizens via the initiative process — are peaking at the very time when public investment in infrastructure is needed to bolster the sagging economy, and our proposed transportation budget takes advantage of this unique opportunity to help jump start the economy and create jobs.

Some proposed local projects include:

- [HOV lane addition](#) on I-5 through Tacoma. \$70 million in federal stimulus money is dedicated to this project which is estimated to start 180 days from when approved and will provide local jobs.
- Buying the land on which [SR 167](#) will be expanded to connect Puyallup and Fife. The state proposes connecting the highway, but isn't in the position to do so now. Buying the land now will ensure it isn't developed which would be much more costly in the future when the state is ready to move forward with construction.

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